DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 421 269 PS 026 760

AUTHOR Cotton, Kathleen
TITLE Lifelong Learning Skills for the Elementary School Child: Tips for Parents. Research You Can Use. Booklet 2.
INSTITUTION Northwest Regional Educational Lab., Portland, OR. School Improvement Program.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 1998-03-00
NOTE 35p.; For Booklets 1 and 3, see PS 026 759 and PS 026 761.
CONTRACT RJ96006501
AVAILABLE FROM Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Documentation Reproduction Service, 501 S.W. Main Street, Suite 500, Portland, OR 97204-3297; phone: 503-275-9519; fax: 503-275-0458; e-mail: products@nwrel.org.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Education; *Elementary School Students; Experiential Learning; *Lifelong Learning; *Parent Materials; *Parent Participation; Parent School Relationship; *Parents as Teachers; Resources

ABSTRACT

Decades of research indicate that when parents take an active part in their children's education, it has a positive impact on their children's academic achievement, attitudes toward learning and school, confidence as a learner, and their social behavior. Parents can also help children develop the lifelong learning skills and attitudes they will need in a rapidly changing society. This booklet examines lifelong learning, and provides suggestions for learning activities for parents to engage in with their elementary school-age children. Part 1 of the booklet, "Background Information," defines lifelong learning, explains why it is important, and details the characteristics of a lifelong learner with regard to attitudes, learning skills, and an understanding of their own learning styles. Part 2, "Learning Activities for Parents and Children," provides specific ideas for parents to work directly with their children in the areas of learning styles, development of positive attitudes toward learning, reading, writing, speaking, listening, research and independent learning skills, study skills, learning strategies, and higher-order thinking skills. Part 3 lists resources for parents and gives availability information. Appendices contain essential vocabulary, an assignment organizer, and a list of words commonly used in assignment and test directions. (KB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 421 269

Research You Can Use Lifelong Learning

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Booklet 2

Lifelong Learning Skills for the Elementary School Child Tips for Parents

PS 026760

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

School Improvement Program

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Jerry D. Kirkpatrick

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This publication is based on work sponsored wholly, or in part, by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), U.S. Department of Education, under Contract Number RJ96006501. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views of OERI, the Department, or any other agency of the U.S. Government.

This publication is in the public domain and may be reproduced and disseminated without permission. Reproduction for sale is not permitted.
Please acknowledge NWREL as the developer.

March 1998

Booklet 2

Lifelong Learning Skills for the Elementary School Child Tips for Parents

Kathleen Cotton

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

School Improvement Program
Robert E. Blum, Director

Parents: You Can Help Your Child Learn

Decades of research have shown that when parents take an active part in their children's education, it has a very positive effect on

- Academic achievement
- Attitudes toward school and learning
- Self-confidence as a learner
- Social behavior

Parents can support their children's learning in many ways: by attending school functions, participating in parent-teacher conferences, serving on school councils, volunteering in the classroom, and tutoring their children at home.

All these kinds of support are beneficial, but research shows that **children benefit most when parents work directly with them on learning activities at home.**

Research also shows that

- Parents do not have to be highly educated or have a lot of free time in order to help their children learn.
- The earlier a child's parents get involved in his or her education, the more good it does.

Training given to parents by the school often helps them to be more effective in helping their children learn. If your child's school offers training to parents, by all means take advantage of it.

Table of Contents

MESSAGE TO PARENTS ii

OTHER RESOURCES IN THIS SERIES iv

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS v

PART 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION 1

PART 2: LEARNING ACTIVITIES FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

- Learning Styles 5
- Positive Attitudes Toward Learning 6
- Reading 8
- Writing 10
- Speaking and Listening 12
- Research and Independent Learning Skills 14
- Study Skills and Learning Strategies 15
- Higher-Order Thinking Skills 17

HELPFUL RESOURCES FOR PARENTS 19

APPENDICES

- A. Essential Vocabulary 21
- B. Assignment Organizer 23
- C. Commonly Used Words in Assignment and Test Directions 25

Other Resources In This Series

You may be interested in getting the other booklets in this Lifelong Learning series:

- *Lifelong Learning Skills for the Preschool/Kindergarten Child: Tips for Parents* (Booklet 1)
- *Lifelong Learning Skills for the Middle/Junior High School Student: Tips for Parents* (Booklet 3)
- *From High School Student to Lifelong Learner: Your Route to Independence* (Booklet 4)

and for teachers and principals

- *Education for Lifelong Learning: Literature Synthesis* (Booklet 5)

Order from:

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
Documentation Reproduction Service

By mail: 101 S.W. Main Street, Suite 500, Portland, OR 97204-3297
By fax: (503)275-0458
By telephone: (503)275-9519
By email: products@nwrel.org

Many people deserve recognition for their work on the five booklets that make up this Lifelong Learning series. I greatly appreciate the contributions of the following individuals.

Acknowledgments

External educational researchers and practitioners serving as reviewers: *Pat Bennett-Forman*, North Kitsap School District, Poulsbo, WA; *Jobanna Frey*, Hollandale School District, Hollandale, MS; *Ruth Gordon*, Ferry Pass Elementary School, Pensacola, FL; *John Hattie*, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, NC; *Barbara Lieb*, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC; *Rey Mayoral*, McKay High School, Salem, OR; *Don McConkey*, Fall City Elementary School, Fall City, WA; *David Mesirow*, Portland Night High School, Portland, OR; *Carol Mitchell*, NWREL Institutional Monitor, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC; *Wink Miller*, Salem-Keizer Public Schools, Salem, OR; *Robert Ruddell*, University of California-Berkeley, Berkeley, CA; *Deanna Woods*, Wilson High School, Portland, OR

NWREL staff reviewers: *Bob Blum, Jane Braunger, Keisha Edwards, Fred King, Jerry Kirkpatrick, Nancey Olson, Tom Owens, Joyce Riha Linik, Joan Shaughnessy, Carol Thomas, Lesley Thompson*

Parent reviewers: Portland Public Schools, Portland, OR

Student reviewers: Portland Public Schools; Salem-Keizer Public Schools, Salem, OR; and Portland State University, Portland, OR

Coordination of the review process: *Fred King, Joan Shaughnessy, Sandy Mossman, Gary Graves*

Reference and research assistance: *Linda Fitch*

Production of review drafts: *Linda Gipe*

Art direction and design of booklets: *Kirk Peeler* of john doe creative

Photography: Cover photos - PhotoDisc, Inside photos - *Greg Wahl-Stephens*

Coordinating final production: *Joyce Riha Linik*

Part 1:

Background Information

Lifelong Learning Skills for the Elementary School Child: Tips for Parents is one of a series of booklets about **lifelong learning**.

< About this booklet

It explains what lifelong learning is, why it is important, and what kinds of personal traits, knowledge, and skills it requires.

It also identifies the kinds of learning support activities that can help prepare your child for lifelong learning.

Following this introductory material, you will find many activities you can use with your child to help build the positive learning attitudes and readiness he or she will need for developing lifelong learning skills.

To some extent, lifelong learning happens naturally. Throughout our lives, we take in information and merge it with what we already know. We also acquire new skills as we go through life.

< What is lifelong learning?

Many of us also learn new things more systematically — for example, by receiving training at work or taking a community college class.

Until recently, however, most of us have not *had* to make a concentrated and lifelong effort to increase our knowledge and skills. So we may not have developed the attitudes and specific skills needed for lifelong learning.

Now, things are changing. Today's students may have no choice but to become lifelong learners in order to be successful.

We hear a lot these days about the "information explosion." More information is being produced than ever before, and new technologies continue to make this information more widely available.

< Why is lifelong learning so important?

In most fields of study, information and knowledge are doubling every three to ten years, and a lot of existing information is becoming obsolete.

Work environments are changing rapidly. Today's students can expect to switch—not just *jobs*, but *entire careers*—four or five times during their working lives.

Business and industry leaders talk about needing a new kind of worker, one who can gather, sort, interpret, evaluate, and apply large amounts of information. These workers will need to be more self-reliant and depend less on supervisors to solve problems and make decisions.

Technology has not simplified work. What it has done is to eliminate many low-level jobs and increase the skill levels needed for the jobs that remain.

What makes a person a lifelong learner? >

What kinds of attitudes and skills prepare people for successful lifelong learning?

Let's take **attitudes** first. Attitudes of lifelong learners include

Attitudes >

- Curiosity and interest in learning new things
- Confidence in their ability to learn
- Motivation for seeking new learning opportunities
- Willingness to be responsible for their own learning
- Willingness to make mistakes and learn from them
- Persistence in tasks
- Openness to constructive criticism
- Patience

Lifelong learners also have an assortment of learning **skills**, including

Skills >

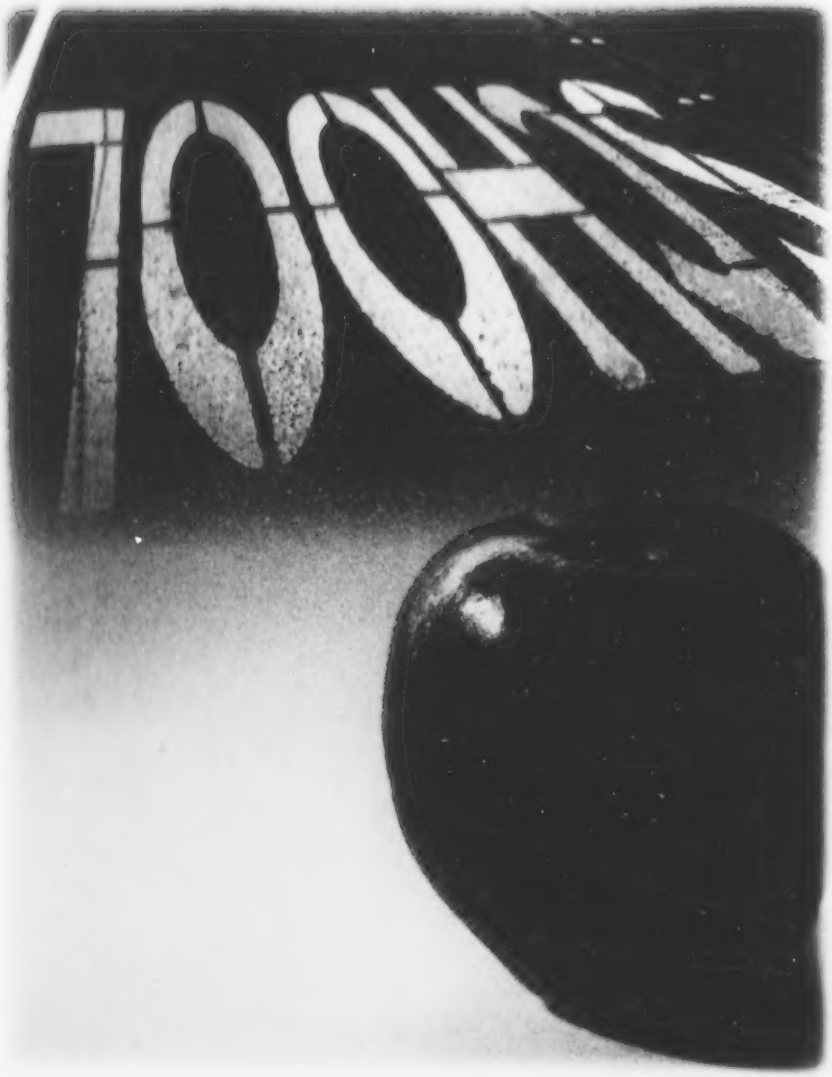
- *Reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills* that make it possible for them to take in information and express it to others.
- *Research and independent learning skills*, such as being aware of what they need to learn; making and following a learning plan; and identifying, retrieving, and organizing information.
- *Study skills and learning strategies* to understand and remember the new information they acquire.

- *Higher-order thinking skills*, including critical and creative thinking, problem solving, decision making, and other skills that take them beyond memorizing facts and formulas to understanding what they mean and how to use them.
- *"Thinking-about-thinking" skills*. People with these skills understand that there are different ways of mentally tackling new learning material. They stop and reflect now and then on how well they are understanding what they are trying to learn, and they know how to change their mental strategy if they are not "getting it."

During the elementary school years children continue building language and communication skills and begin developing the kinds of learning-to-learn skills that they will use throughout their school years and beyond.

In addition to these attitudes and skills, lifelong learners have a good understanding of their *learning styles*—their own best ways of learning. At the beginning of the next section are activities to help you identify and expand your child's learning style.

< Understanding learning styles



Part 2:

Learning Activities for Parents and Children

Learning Styles

A person's learning style includes such things as whether he or she learns best from reading, from studying pictures or diagrams, from listening to an oral description, or from doing hands-on activities or moving about.

Learning style also includes such things as the time of day a person learns best; whether silence or soft music is more helpful; whether learning alone or with others is more useful; and factors such as lighting, temperature, and surroundings for study.

Activities such as the following can help to identify your child's main learning style and also help him or her to become familiar with learning through different senses and in different environments.

Make available pictures, maps, diagrams, charts, and art materials. In addition to providing drawings and sketches to illustrate points to your child, encourage him or her to ask teachers and others for graphic illustrations when verbal communications are unclear.

< Pictures and charts (visual)

Encourage your child to sketch illustrations along with taking notes in class to see if this helps him or her to learn and remember lessons better.

< Sketching (visual and hands-on)

If your child wishes to do so, allow him or her to read aloud softly to improve his or her grasp of the material.

< Read aloud

Provide opportunities for your child to make things and take them apart by giving him or her puzzles, board games, and plastic models.

< Games, puzzles, and models (hands-on)

Make and use number cards and other "math manipulatives" with your child to reinforce his or her understanding of math concepts.

< Math manipulatives (hands-on)

Word cards > (hands-on and visual)

Make word and punctuation "cards" and have your child use these to practice making and punctuating sentences.

Hands in motion > (hands-on and movement)

People who learn well from touch or motion often benefit from being able to keep their hands moving when viewing or listening to explanations of learning material. Doodling or other tactile activities should not be discouraged unless they interfere with the learning of others.

Pacing, gesturing, etc. > (movement)

If your child tends to gesture, pace, or move rhythmically during activities such as memorizing multiplication tables or learning spelling words, don't discourage him or her; these activities may be helping him or her to learn.

Positive Attitudes Toward Learning

The habits, attitudes, and general outlook of a lifelong learner begin to be developed during the first years of life.

Those who study lifelong learners find that they usually had parents who

- Held high expectations for their school achievement and behavior
- Warmly encouraged them to work hard and do their best
- Were careful *not* to compare their children's performance with that of other children or try to get them to improve by threatening or punishing them
- Made plenty of books, magazines and other reading material available
- Spent time reading nearly every day. Parents can *say* that reading and learning are important in life, but it is much more convincing if the children see that their parents make time for reading and learning in their own lives.

Routine > Keep as regular a household routine as you can; structure and consistency help children to feel secure.

< Responsibilities

As your child gets older, give him or her a few regular household responsibilities. This will help your child to assume more responsibility for his or her own learning as he or she matures.

< Expectations

Tell your child that you expect him or her to do well in school. Remind your child that doing well depends on *effort* much more than on inborn ability. Keep expectations high but realistic by encouraging your child to strive for small improvements.

< Homework

Help your child to establish a set time and place for homework. Make available all the things he or she will require—good lighting, reasonable quiet, a desk or table, paper, pencils, art equipment. See the section on Study Skills and Learning Strategies (p.15) for ideas about how to arrange your child's study area.

< Homework problems

If your child is having trouble with homework, help him or her to break it down into smaller and more manageable tasks. Also, many communities have a homework "hotline" number students can call for help with their assignments.

< Homework priority

Make it clear that homework has priority over television watching and other recreational activities. Also, monitor the amount of television watching. Research tells us that children who watch 20 or more hours of television per week generally do not do well in school.

< Television/games

Watch and discuss educational television programs with your child, and play educational games with him or her.

< Praise

Praise your child's increases in effort and improvements in performance, but do not give empty praise or praise for work that is obviously poor; children know the difference.

< Avoid negative feedback

When working with your child on learning activities, avoid saying "no," looking annoyed, or showing other signs of disapproval.

< Keep on reading

Continue to read to your child during the elementary years, sometimes trading and becoming the listener as he or she develops more and more skill as a reader.

< Talk about school

Encourage your child to talk about what happens at school and how he or she feels about it. Ask specific questions or suggest role-playing: "You be the teacher and I'll be the student. Show me something we would do if this were your class."

< Curiosity

Arouse your child's curiosity by calling attention to interesting or puzzling things in the environment, such as a new building under construc-

tion or a pair of old shoes hanging on a power line, and ask questions to stimulate his or her thinking.

Connecting facts >

Help your child connect new facts and ideas to things he or she already knows. For example, if you are explaining that it is a superstition to fear bad luck when a black cat cross one's path, call attention to a superstition he or she already knows, such as the idea that breaking a mirror is bad luck.

Model enthusiasm >

When your child asks you a question and you do not know the answer, show enthusiasm for learning by planning with your child a way to find the answer.

Child reads to parent >

Reading

If we ask what is the most important skill students need to develop in school, most people would agree that it is *reading* — and they would be right. Success in school and in most jobs depends on the ability to read. People need to develop reading skills early in life and use them throughout their lives.

As your child gains more reading skills, help him or her to apply knowledge of letters and sounds to figuring out new words.

Have your child read to you — twice a week or oftener and for at least ten minutes at a time. These short sessions add up to a lot of extra reading practice. When your child struggles over a word, tell him or her what the word is and look it up together.

Letter cards >

Make a set of "letter cards" by writing individual letters of the alphabet on index cards. Have three or four cards for each letter. Use the cards for letter games that can reinforce your child's learning. Try the following games and make up others.

- Say a word and hold up several cards; have your child pick out the letter whose sound *begins* the word or *ends* the word.
- Hold up one letter card at a time, and ask your child to think of a word that begins or ends with that letter.
- Spell out a word with the cards, and then say three or four words including the word you spelled out. Have your child say "yes" when you say the word you spelled out.

- Play a game of initials of people you both know, for example, "Who is K.C.?"

Continue library visits and arrange to participate in the library's programs for parents and children. < Library

Start your own home library, setting aside a section of a bookcase for your child's books. Work with him or her to arrange the books by some method, such as by subject—sports, animals, and so on. < Home library

Set times for silent reading at home, and make sure your child has a selection of materials—books or magazines—from which to choose. < Silent reading times

Visit secondhand bookstores and garage sales, and exchange reading materials with other families to keep costs down. < Getting reading materials

When your child wants to discuss with you something he or she has read, the following are good questions to ask:

- What was the book (or story, passage, chapter) about?
- What was the most interesting part?
- Was there a part you didn't like? If so, what was it? < Questions about reading
- Was there anything in the reading you didn't understand?
- What do you think you will remember the most about the reading?

Do cooking projects together, having your child read the ingredients from recipes. Teach him or her the common abbreviations used in recipes: t = teaspoon, c = cup, etc. < Cooking projects

Do "household reading" with your child—read together the text on food cans and boxes, toiletries, CDs, game boxes, etc. < Household reading

Do "mobile reading" together—road signs, business marquees, billboards, vanity license plates, etc. < Mobile reading

Conduct "grocery store reading" activities with your child; for example, have him or her read the signs indicating what is in each aisle, or give your child a coupon and have him or her use it to find and retrieve the item. < Grocery store reading

Have books and magazines in the car for your child to look at and read when he or she goes with you for shopping and other errands. Be sure to stock up on reading material that is on subjects of interest to your child when preparing for family vacations. < Reading on the road

When traveling, have your child look for license plates from different states and write down each one he or she sees. You and your child children can have a contest to see who spots the largest number of different license plates in a certain period of time. < License plates

When you and your child see movies or television programs together (comedies, dramas, action stories), keep track of situations where reading skills made it possible for the heroes and heroines to succeed—or where *lack* of these skills interfered with someone's success. Discuss these with your child when the movie or program ends.

List of books to read >

Encourage your child to keep a card file or list of books he or she has read. This can be helpful when looking for new reading material or for ideas for a school report.

Words and phrases we all need to know >

Appendix A contains a list of words and phrases we all need to know. Some of these are used to direct us to common services (such as "post office" and "restrooms"). Others alert us to things that are dangerous or forbidden so we can avoid them (words such as "flammable" and "no trespassing"). Go over this list with your child from time to time so he or she will become familiar with these terms.

Writing

Writing skills have always been important, and they still are. Your child will have to complete writing assignments throughout his or her school career to prepare for further education, training, employment, and adult personal life.

Writing instruction: the old way >

Years ago, teachers would give writing assignments; students would turn them in; and teachers would read, correct, and return them with a grade.

Writing-as-a-process >

Today, teachers are more likely to teach *writing-as-a-process*. This means that the writing process is broken down into several steps. The following description is intended to help you understand why your child may be taking a different approach to writing than you did when you were in school.

In the steps of writing-as-a-process,

Prewriting >

1. First comes *prewriting* activities, where the student gathers ideas and takes notes.

Drafting >

2. Then comes *drafting*, with the student writing the ideas he or she wants to express. Teachers tell their students not to be too concerned with language "mechanics," such as spelling, at this point. Often, the teacher or a classmate looks over the draft and makes suggestions for improvement.

3. During *revising*, the writer makes whatever changes he or she thinks necessary, such as adding or deleting, reorganizing, or rewriting for clarity. < Revising

4. *Editing* consists of correcting grammar, spelling, and punctuation, as well as making certain that the ideas flow smoothly and logically. < Editing

5. Finally, *publication* takes place. This includes distributing the finished product to teachers, classmates, parents, and/or community members who will read and comment on it. < Publication

Whatever writing strategy your child learns in school, there are many things you can do to help him or her become a better writer.

Encourage your child to write stories featuring characters from stories he or she has read. Don't be concerned about errors in grammar, punctuation or spelling when your child is first writing stories; the point is to get ideas down in writing. < Write stories

Give your child materials and help for writing thank-you notes when he or she receives gifts. This develops both writing skills and good manners. Offer to help if he or she has trouble getting started. < Thank-you notes

Ask your child to help you make a grocery list. Say the words for your child to write, helping out as needed. Have your child add grocery suggestions of his or her own. < Grocery lists

Make a book with your child by folding several pieces of paper in half and stapling the book on the fold. Give each page a category name, such as "things with wheels," "furry animals," or "things that are hot." Have your child think of things in each category and write them down. < Make a book

When traveling, keep a journal of the special things you see and do; encourage your child to do the same. < Travel journal

When reading magazines and newsletters, keep track of things children can send for through the mail. Help your child to write a letter requesting the item and address the envelope. The book, *Free Things for Kids to Write Away For**, tells how to send away for a large variety of items. < Write for free things

Join with your child in making homemade greeting cards for family members. Work on getting the message right using scratch paper; then copy it onto the card. < Greeting cards

* *Free Things for Kids to Write Away For* (64pp.) by Jack Abuff is available from Internet Image Builders, P.O. Box 1120, Sterling, VA 20167-0899. Order #4039. Price $3.98, plus $4.00 handling fee. To order by FAX: 1-800-965-8851. To order online: <www.image-builders.com/bookstore/catalog/book/a-4039.html>

Children sometimes need help getting started on a school writing assignment. If this happens, work with your child to select a topic, brainstorm ideas, and identify sources of information (including his or her list of books read). Once a paper is drafted, be willing to read it and give comments.

Write notes >

Agree to set aside a time when you and your child will write each other notes instead of talking. Save your child's notes and help him or her with misspelled words.

Family newsletter >

Keep a family log or newsletter of events and encourage your child to contribute regularly. Share the family news with extended family members, neighbors, etc.

Scrapbook >

Encourage your child to keep a scrapbook of sports figures, celebrities, animals, foreign countries, food, or other interests. Have him or her cut pictures from magazines, mount them, and then label and write comments about them.

Activity schedule >

Join with your child in making a schedule of his or her activities and posting it on the refrigerator or other prominent place. Include both regular activities (study time, music lessons, etc.) and special activities (staying overnight with a friend, going on a school field trip, etc.).

Speaking and Listening

Whether a person is in the classroom, asking or giving directions, or simply talking with family members, speaking and listening skills will remain important throughout life. You can help your child develop these skills during the course of everyday activities.

Listening as a useful skill >

Talk with your child about the importance of listening in school and in life. Point out that a good listener will (1) understand what is going on, (2) learn many new things and earn good grades, (3) avoid making mistakes, (4) have friends, because everyone likes a good listener.

Respectful listening >

Model respectful listening at home, at the movies, with tour guides, and at school functions. This includes listening to your child. Some tips include

- Let the speaker finish a sentence; don't cut him or her off or interrupt.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Display a pleasant disposition.
- Model a good "listening pose" by looking attentive, nodding, giving brief verbal feedback and asking questions for clarification.

Have conversations with your child about school. Rather than asking, "How was school?" or "What did you learn today?" ask your child to describe the day—or a typical day—from start to finish. Ask questions about the teacher, special friends, recess activities, etc.

< Parent-child conversations

When reading a story to your child, stop before the end and ask him or her to think of an ending and tell it to you. Then finish the story and compare its ending with the one your child made up. Ask your child which ending he or she likes better, and why. (You can also make up an ending and then compare it to the others.)

< Predict story ending

Have your child listen for a certain word when you are reading a story to him or her and to say the word out loud every time he or she hears you read it. Reward his or her good listening with a few extra minutes of story time.

< Special word

If you have access to a tape recorder, have your child tape and listen to his or her voice reading a story or a school paper. After listening, encourage your child to record it a second time, attempting to change anything he or she did not like about the first reading. Listen again and praise improvements.

< Read and record

Play a game of "telephone" at home, with each person listening to a phrase or sentence whispered by a family member and then whispering it, in turn, to another family member. As a group, compare the beginning and ending messages. How did the message change from beginning to end? Why do you think the changes happened?

< Telephone

When grocery shopping, talk with your child about what products you are shopping for and how you are making decisions about brands and sizes, etc.

< "Shop talk"

If you have more than one child, encourage listening and speaking skills by having the child or children who are the "audience" for a sibling's report summarize the main points.

< Being an audience

After reading a story, ask your child questions about it: "Who is the main character?" "Who are the other characters?" Ask your child to describe each character in a few words.

< Ask questions about stories

Play "Who Am I?" with your child by stating the first letter of the name of a real person or fictional character and allowing your child to ask yes-or-no questions about the person until he or she figures out who it is or has to give up. Then let your child think of someone and you ask questions. This kind of game builds thinking skills as well as speaking and listening skills. Variations: "Where Do I Live?" "What Animal Am I?"

< Who Am I?

Pay attention to the kinds of settings or activities that interfere with your child's ability to listen carefully. At times when it is especially important for your child to hear and remember what is being said, try to remove the distractions or remove the child from the distracting environment, whichever is easier.

Research and Independent Learning Skills

Readiness for independent learning grows out of taking responsibility in other areas of life. Give your child duties at home, and let him or her know that everyday life runs better because of the tasks he or she does.

Privileges >

Make sure your child understands that responsibilities and privileges go together. When your child has shown you that he or she can do a household chore consistently and well, allow him or her more independence. For example, allow him or her to stay up later or assume more control over the daily homework schedule.

Use the library >

If you use the library to find out more about subjects that interest you, your child will learn that using research and library skills are a part of everyday life. Reference materials include maps and globes, drawings, photographs, graphs, and other visual materials, as well as print materials and electronic resources such as those on CD-ROM.

Research help >

When your child becomes interested in a topic and wants to know more, take him or her to the library and ask the librarian for help in locating useful references. Doing this repeatedly will help you and your child to become familiar with finding and using reference materials.

Reference materials at home >

Teach your child to use the reference materials you have at home, such as the dictionary, telephone directory, almanac, thesaurus, television schedule, atlas, encyclopedia, CD-ROMs, and others. If you have Internet access, you can find these and many other kinds of resources online.

Internet >

If you or a friend have an Internet connection, you and your child can begin learning how to use the Internet to learn about things you are interested in. Some libraries also offer students free Internet access.

Help...but not too much >

If your child needs to prepare a report, notebook, display, collection,

model, or other product, help out by looking over his or her work at different points in the project. Give encouragement and call attention to problems such as unclear labeling or misspelled words. However, avoid the temptation to help too much.

Study Skills and Learning Strategies

In the 21st century, having job-specific skills will not be as important as the ability to learn new things quickly and well. Study skills are tactics for learning and remembering, and learning strategies are groups of these tactics organized into a series of steps for more in-depth learning.

Most children need time to unwind after school and before doing their homework; give your child the opportunity for playtime or a snack before asking him or her to settle down and study.

< Time to unwind

Remember that applying study skills and strategies is most effective when your child has a designated place and time for study. It can also be helpful if you do quiet work yourself during your child's study time.

< Study time

It can be helpful for your child to give his or her study area a special name to reinforce its special purpose—"Mary's Brain Center," "Eric's Study Retreat," or "Maxine's Learning Room," etc.

< Name the study area

Help your child to stock the study area with the materials and supplies he or she is likely to need—paper, scissors, ruler, paper clips, pencils, cellophane tape, stapler, pencil sharpener, calendar, dictionary, encyclopedia, eraser, lamp, desk or table, chair, bookcase, etc. Have your child organize the small materials in a homework tray or box.

< ...and stock it up

Using a shoebox or other handy box, work with your child to make a "mailbox" with his or her name on it, and place it in his or her study area. The mailbox is for notes from you and other family members and for any mail your child receives.

< "Mailbox"

Make sure your child has a small pad or notebook for writing down homework assignments and encourage him or her to use it.

< Assignment notebook

Appendix B of this booklet is an "Assignment Organizer" that you can use with your child to help him or her plan and carry out a learning pro-

< Assignment organizer

ject. Your child will be able to complete some steps easily, but others might require some suggestions or other help from you. Review the Assignment Organizer with your child as he or she is coming to the end of a project to make sure that all the steps have been followed.

Avoid interference >

Help your child to avoid or minimize things that can interfere with study—noise, room that is too warm or too cold, hunger, fatigue, eating too much sugar or fat, etc.

Study tips >

Find out if your child's teacher has given the class "tips" for learning and remembering school subject matter. Or ask the teacher him/herself. If so, learn what they are and reinforce them at home.

Transfer skills >

If your child has used a learning skill or strategy successfully in one subject area, encourage him or her to try it again with material from a different subject.

Tricks for memorizing >

Help your child to think up ways to make memorizing easier. For example, learning the names of the Great Lakes can be made easier by remembering the word, "**homes**" for **H**uron, **O**ntario, **M**ichigan, **E**rie, and **S**uperior.

Practice memorizing >

Play games in which your child memorizes something and you quiz him or her. For example, he or she can memorize license plates of family's and friends' cars, telephone numbers, statistics related to favorite sports figures (batting averages, point and rebound averages, etc.), state capitals, the planets, names of past teachers, etc.

Summarizing >

Putting an idea in your own words can help you to remember it. Practice this with your child by summing up in your own words something he or she has said, and then have him summarize what you say.

Encourage observation >

When you and your child are doing errands, make up questions about the things you see and do; then ask these questions when you get back home. For example, ask, "What color is Uncle James's house?" "Did you see any bodies of water?"

Preparation for tests >

When your child is preparing for a test, use the textbook, worksheets, or notes to quiz him or her on the material. This is a good time to work with your child on memory cues, as in the example above, for material he or she has trouble remembering. Encourage your child to test him- or herself periodically, too.

Appendix C contains a list of words commonly used in assignment or

test directions. Go over these words with your child to make sure he or she knows what they mean.

Cooperative learning in small groups can be an effective way for children to gain knowledge and skills from one another and to learn teamwork. Encourage your child to engage in cooperative projects—both at your home or at the homes of schoolmates.

< Cooperative learning

Share with your child any "memory tricks" you make up to help yourself remember things. One woman focused on the idea of "robin's egg" to remember the name "Rob Eckstrom," and to remember how to pronounce the name of former Romanian leader Ceaucescu, she thought of a man showing the letter "O" on his chest: "Showchesque."

< Share your memory tricks

Higher-Order Thinking Skills

You can help your child build skills for critical and creative thinking, problem solving, and decision making. You can also help your child to understand his or her own thinking processes and to improve them.

Make a habit of asking your child "how" and "why" questions. These stretch the mind and increase one's ability to figure things out. Listen to and answer your child's "how" and "why" questions, too.

< "How" and "why" questions

Read fables with your child and together try to figure out the "moral of the story." Ask questions that can help him or her to draw conclusions from the story's events and outcome.

< Fables

Play a game where you make up the beginning of a sentence and your child finishes it by adding comments that make sense in relation to the beginning, for example: Parent: "My house is very cold today, because..." Child: "...because I left the window open" or "...because I forgot to turn on the furnace."

< Finish the sentence

After you watch a television show with your child, ask if the events of the show really happened or if it is "just a story." Talk about ways to tell fiction and nonfiction apart; for example, stories in news broadcasts, documentaries and biographical profiles focus on real events, while most comedies and dramas are fiction, though some are "based on" true stories.

< Fact or fiction

Stimulate creative thinking by asking questions such as "What would hap-

< "What if..."

pen if Bugs Bunny met Bart Simpson?" "If we found life on another planet, what kinds of creatures would they be?" "What if everyone suddenly became bald?" Make up your own "what if" situations and work with them with your child.

Predictions >

Read or tell a brief story, but stop before the end, and ask your child to predict what will happen. Discuss his or her reasons for making that particular prediction. Then compare the story ending with your child's prediction.

Think out loud >

When you are trying to solve a riddle or puzzle, "think out loud" so that your child can hear you describe the steps you go through in your mind as you work toward a solution. Then have your child speak his or her thoughts aloud while attempting another puzzle or riddle.

You can also ask your child to go back and describe the process he or she followed in coming up with the answer to a problem or riddle.

Positive self-talk >

Help your child to form the habit of positive self-talk. Encourage your child to approach a school assignment or test by reminding him- or herself, "I am a smart person and can do this task well," "I can relax and organize my thoughts so as to do well on this," "I have learned a lot on this subject and can write about what I know," etc.

Dealing with distraction >

If your child is having trouble paying attention in school or at home, see if you can identify what is interfering with his or her ability to listen attentively. Does he or she have trouble concentrating when hungry…or worried about something…or extremely interested in some personal hobby or project? Once you know what the distraction is, you can take steps to minimize it.

New learning >

When your child begins to learn something new (for school, Scouts, church, hobby, etc.), have him or her put two headings on a sheet of paper – "What I Know about (the subject)" and "What I Want to Learn" – and make a list under each heading. Have him or her indicate with arrows when each "want to learn" item becomes a "what I know."

Doing activities from this booklet with your elementary school child can help him or her succeed in school now and build skills for a lifetime of productive learning.

Other useful resources and ordering information are presented in the next section.

Be sure to see the appendices following the resources listing.

Helpful Resources for Parents

*American Association of School Administrators. *Brush Up Your Study Skills: Tips for Students and Parents.* Arlington, VA: AASA, 1995 (ED 381 910).

American Federation of Teachers/U.S. Department of Education. "Make Reading a Family Affair: Help Parents Help Their Children Become Lifelong Readers." *American Educator* 17/4 (Winter 1993-94): 32-43.

Available from AFT Order Department, 555 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20001, 1-800-238-1133. Ask for item 350. 1-9 copies: $.50 each; 10 or more copies: $.40 each.

*Amundson, K. *101 Ways Parents Can Help Students Achieve.* Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators, 1991 (ED 346 973).

*Arizona State Department of Education. *Learning Activities Parents Can Do With Their Children.* Phoenix, AZ: Arizona State Department of Education, 1989 (ED 321 898).

*Association of American Publishers. *Helping Your Child Succeed in School.* New York: Association of American Publishers—School Division, 1989 (ED 350 077).

Available from Association of American Publishers, School Division, 220 East 23rd St., New York, NY 10010. $1.50 for single copy; $1.25 each for 10-99 copies; $1.00 each for 100 or more copies.

Ban, J. R. *Parents Assuring Student Success (PASS): Achievement Made Easy by Learning Together.* Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service, 1993.

Available from National Educational Service, PO Box 8, Department V2, Bloomington, IN 47402-0008m 800-733-6786. $21.95 (shipping/handling charges waived if prepaid; if not, $3.00 minimum or 7%).

*Cano, L. R. *Helping Your Child Learn: A Parent's Guide = Ayudando a Su Hijo a Aprender: Una Guia para los Padres.* Houston, TX: Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, August 1988 (ED 281 966).

Dreilinger, M., and Kerner, R. *How to Help Children Succeed in School.* Plainview, NY: The Family Forum Library, Bureau for At-Risk Youth, 1992.

Available from Bureau for At-Risk Youth, PO Box 760, Plainview, NY 11803-0760, 1-800-99-YOUTH. $1.95 each, ISBN 1-56688-007-6.

Asterisk (*) indicates that the publication may be purchased from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service, operated by DynCorp I&ET, 7420 Fullerton Rd., Suite 110 Springfield, VA 22153; 1-800-443-ERIC (3742) or 703/440-1400; FAX: 703/440-1408; Internet: <edrs@inet.ed.gov>

Giacobbe, A.; Osborne M.; and Woods, D. B. "Building a Family Learning Environment." Unit Two in *Parent and Family Involvement*. Washington, DC: American Federation of Teachers, Educational Research and Dissemination Program, 1996.

Available from Educational Research and Dissemination Program, Educational Issues Department, American Federation of Teachers, 555 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20001.

Jones, C. *More Parents Are Teachers, Too: Encouraging Your 6- to 12-Year-Old*. Charlotte, VT: Williamson Publishing Co., 1990.

Available from Williamson Publishing Co., PO Box 185, Charlotte, VT 05445, 1-800-234-8791. $9.95.

*Ramos, N., and Santos, R. S. *Helping Your Children Succeed in School: A Parent's Guide*. San Antonio, TX: San Antonio I.S.D.; Texas A and I University, Spring 1988 (ED 329 370).

*Reyes, M., and Rothman, D. *Parents as Partners: Planning Early for your Children's School Success and College Attendance. Revised Edition = Los Padres como Socios: Planificando para el Exito Escolar y la Asistencia al Colegio de Sus Ninos. Edicion Revisada*. Sacramento: California State Department of Education; California State University, 1995 (ED 381 254).

*Rich, D. *Summer Home Learning Recipes for Parents and Children, Grades: K-3, 4-6*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 1994 (ED 371 907).

*Shefelbine, J. *Parents Sharing Books: Motivation and Reading*. Bloomington, IN: Family Literacy Center, Indiana University, 1990 (ED 324 662).

**Spanish Language Briefs for Parents, 1995*. Charleston, WV: ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools, 1995 (ED 390 630).

U.S. Department of Education. *Learning Partners: A Guide to Educational Activities for Families*. Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, May 1997.

Available in English and Spanish from National Library of Education, 555 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20208-5721. Or call 1-800-424-1616. Free.

*Vogler, D. E., and Hutchins, D. E. *Parents as Tutors: Minimizing the Homework Hassle*. Alexandria, VA: National Community Education Association, 1988 (ED 338 999).

Available from National Community Education Association, 801 N. Fairfax St., Suite 209, Alexandria, VA 22314. $6.95 each; quantity discounts.

Essential Vocabulary

Adults Only
Antidote
Ask Attendant for Key
Beware
Boys
Bridge Out
Bus Only
Bus Station
Bus Stop
Caution
Closed
Combustible
Condemned
Construction Zone
Contaminated
Curve
Danger
Dangerous Curve
Dead End
Deep Water
Deer/Cattle Crossing
Dentist
Detour
Dim Lights
Dip
Doctor (Dr.)
Do Not Block Driveway
Do Not Cross
Do Not Enter
Do Not Inhale Fumes
Do Not Push
Do Not Refreeze
Do Not Use Near Heat
Do Not Use Near Open Flame
Don't Walk
Down
Drive Carefully
Dynamite
Elevator
Emergency
Emergency Vehicles Only
Employees Only
End Construction
Entrance
Escalator
Exit
Exit Only
Exit Speed 30
Explosives
External Use Only
Falling Rocks
Fire Escape
Fire Extinguisher
First Aid
Flammable
Found
Four-way Stop
Fragile
Freeway
Garage
Gasoline
Gate
Gentlemen
Girls
Handle with Care
Hands Off
Help
High Voltage
Hospital Zone
In
Information
Inspection Station
Instructions
Keep Away
Keep Closed at all Times
Keep Left (Right)
Keep Off (the Grass)
Keep Out
Ladies
Lane Ends
Last Chance for Gas
Left Lane Must Turn Left
Left Turn Only
Left Turn This Signal Only
Live Wires
Loading Zone
MPH
Mechanic on Duty
Men
Men Working
Merge Left
Merging Traffic
No Admittance
No Checks Cashed
No Credit
No Diving
No Dumping
No Fires
No Fishing
No Hunting
No Left Turn
No Loitering
No Minors
No Parking
No Passing
No Pets
No Right Turn
No Right Turn on Red
No Smoking
No Standing

These are commonly used words and phrases that warn or give instructions. Explain these terms to your child (or look them up) and review them occasionally.

No Stopping
No Swimming
No Trespassing
No Turns
Not for Internal Use
Nurse
Office
One Way—Do Not Enter
Open
Out
Out of Order
Pedestrians Prohibited
Playground
Poison/Poisonous
Police
Posted
Post No Bills
Post Office
Private
Private Property
Proceed at Your Own Risk
Pull
Push
Railroad
Restrooms
Resume Speed
Right Lane Must Turn Right
Right Turn Only
Road Closed
Road Ends
Safety First
School Zone
Shallow Water
Shelter
Slide Area
Slippery When Wet
Slow Down
Slower Traffic Keep Right
Smoking Prohibited
Speed Checked by Radar
Steep Grade
Step Down (Up)
Stop
Stop Ahead
Stop for Pedestrians
Stop Motor
Taxi Stand
Thin Ice
This End Up
This Lane May Turn Left
This Side Up
Traffic Circle
Truck Route
Turn On (Off) Lights
Up
Use Before (date)
Use in Well Ventilated Area
Use Low Gear
Use Other Door
Violators Will Be Prosecuted
Walk
Wanted
Warning
Watch Your Step
Wet Paint
Winding Road
Women
Yield
Yield Right of Way

Reprinted with permission from the Arizona State Department of Education

Assignment Organizer

Task Definition

Name Teacher

What am I supposed to do?

What information do I need in order to do this?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Information-Seeking Strategies

What are the possible sources to find this information?

Which are the best for me to use?

Location and Access

Where will I find these sources?

Who can help me find what I need?

Research You Can Use Lifelong Learning

Use of Information

How will I record the information that I find?

__take notes using cards
__take notes on notebook paper
__take notes using a data chart
__draw pictures
__talk into a tape recorder
__other

How will I give credit to my sources?

Write title, author, page number

__on note cards
__on notebook paper
__on data chart

Synthesis

What product or performance will I make to finish my assignment?

How will I give credit to my sources in my final product or performance?

__include a written list (bibliography)
__after the performance, tell which sources I used
__other

Evaluation

How will I know that I have done my best? (All must be checked before the assignment is turned in.)

__What I made to finish the assignment is what I was supposed to do in Task Definition, above.
__Information found in Use of Information matches information needed in Task Definition.
__I gave credit to my sources (even if I used a textbook).
__My work is neat.
__My work is complete and includes my name and the date.

Copyright © 1995
by Barbara A. Jansen.
Reprinted with permission.

Appendix C

Commonly Used Words in Assignment and Test Directions

add
after
alike
aloud
alphabet
alphabetical
answer
answers
antonym
around
array
before
begin
beginning
behind
below
beside
blank
bottom
box
circle
color
column
corner
cross out
cut
difference
different
direction
divide
dotted
draw
end
ending
erase
estimate
example
fifth
fill in
first
fold
folder
fourth
glue
hold
homonym
horizontal
how
in between
in front of
last
left
line
make
mark
match
middle
miss
missing
multiply
ninth
opposite
order
over
page
paint
paper
paragraph
part
paste
phrase
picture
plural
prefix
question
read
rhyme
rhyming
right
ring
row
same
say
second
section
sentence
sentences
seventh
silent
silently
singular
sixth
space
spaces
spell
spelling
start
stop
subtract
suffix
tenth
third
top
trace
twice
under
underline
vertical
what
when
where
which
who
why

These are words that appear frequently in directions for assignments and tests. Go over them (or look them up) with your child to make sure he or she understands what they mean.

Reprinted with permission from the Arizona State Department of Education